

Copy

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Electrification Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

May 22, 1947

Hon. Jamie L. Whitten
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Whitten:

This is in reply to your inquiry relative to the job yet to be done in rural electrification.

The first of this year there were $2\frac{1}{2}$ million farm families still living without electric light and power. This is the estimate of the Edison Electric Institute, the organization of the public utility industry. Our own current official estimate of the number of unelectrified farms is on the basis of June 30, 1946, since we compile such figures at the close of each fiscal year. Allowing for progress during the June 30 to December 31 period, our tabulations and those of the Institute are substantially the same.

We estimate that in addition to the above unelectrified farms, there are more than 2 million rural establishments such as schools, crossroad business places, and rural dwellings not on farms that do not have high-line power.

Unelectrified farms are to be found everywhere across the face of our land. This is the case despite the remarkable work that has been done in the last dozen years of the National rural electrification program whereby the percentage of electrified farms has been raised from 11 percent to approximately 57 percent.

Few counties, even in the most prosperous areas, have completed their rural electrification. While a big and difficult part of the job remaining is in the less densely settled areas of the West, it is a fact that almost 60 percent of the unelectrified farms are east of the Mississippi River. The States of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, as a group, have more unelectrified farms than all of the 11 westernmost States together.

You will note from the attached tabulation that 9 States each have more than 120,000 farms still awaiting the highlines. In each of 18 States there are more than 60,000 farms without electricity.

These figures give an indication of the magnitude of what has yet to be done, but it takes more than statistics to indicate fully the job ahead in rural electrification. The National rural electrification program was inaugurated in 1935 in the belief that electricity no longer could be

2-Hon. Jamie L. Whitten

regarded as a luxury and that it provided both a guiding light and a dynamic force to lead our Nation forward. The success of the program during these 12 years indicates the soundness of this belief. Electricity today is as necessary to the welfare of rural areas as it has long been to those urban. The job ahead consists of making this modern necessity available to every rural community without delay.

I am sure that you have seen repeatedly among your constituents how the highlines have laid the basis for new prosperity, health, and happiness. Every day we hear of farmers who have increased their incomes and decreased their costs by using electricity. Every day we learn of new industries springing up in electrified communities. Better opportunities for adequate school lighting, for rural health clinics, and for improved farm sanitation through pressure water systems have accompanied the highlines. The farmers who are directing their own electric cooperatives through the country speak vividly of what electricity means to them and their wives.

The REA today has a backlog of applications on hand and in process in the field for rural electrification loans totaling \$244,584,000. Farmers in every State and every community are insisting that they be given the opportunity to provide themselves with electricity. It is inconceivable, in this Twentieth Century, that so many American citizens should still be living in the age of the kerosene lamp. Even though good progress has been made during these dozen years, the fact that approximately 43 percent of the Nation's farms still are unelectrified represents a powerful challenge to future action. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that reaching the remaining 43 percent is the hardest part of the job. By and large, the people still unserved are in the thinner, less densely settled areas. It will take more effort, more material and more dollars per consumer to finish the job than has been required so far. The tough part of the job is still before us.

Thank you for your interest in the progress of this program. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Claude R. Wickard

Administrator

Enclosure

FARMS WITHOUT CENTRAL STATION ELECTRIC SERVICE

	June 30, 1946		December 31, 1946	
	Number (1)	Percent (2)	Number (3)	Percent (2)
	(REA Data)		(EET Data)	
UNITED STATES	2,677,036	45.7	2,523,469	43.1
Alabama	136,805	61.2	129,069	57.8
Arizona	3,548	27.0	2,242	17.1
Arkansas	135,667	68.2	130,469	65.6
California	15,671	11.3	18,417	13.3
Colorado	19,485	40.9	17,918	37.6
Connecticut	1,108	5.0	1,141	5.1
Delaware	2,939	31.6	2,896	31.2
Florida	30,367	49.7	30,759	50.3
Georgia	130,170	57.6	122,797	54.4
Idaho	6,765	16.3	6,098	14.7
Illinois	69,349	34.0	64,439	31.6
Indiana	38,601	21.9	34,770	19.8
Iowa	53,428	25.6	49,034	23.5
Kansas	89,919	63.7	87,592	62.0
Kentucky	150,710	63.2	148,001	62.1
Louisiana	80,056	61.9	74,595	57.7
Maine	13,112	31.1	12,184	28.3
Maryland	14,325	34.7	11,515	27.9
Massachusetts	2,936	7.9	2,507	6.3
Michigan	21,543	12.3	17,768	10.1
Minnesota	82,668	43.8	80,257	42.5
Mississippi	199,093	75.5	188,428	71.5
Missouri	144,992	59.7	135,534	55.8
Montana	24,250	64.2	23,647	62.6
Nebraska	71,067	63.6	68,256	61.1

528156

598964

FARMS WITHOUT CENTRAL STATION ELECTRIC SERVICE

- 2 -

	June 30, 1946		December 31, 1946	
	Number (1)	Percent (2)	Number (3)	Percent (2)
	(REA Data)		(FEI Data)	
Nevada	1,716	50.0	1,729	50.4
New Hampshire	2,732	14.5	2,286	12.2
New Jersey	1,570	6.0	1,526	5.8
New Mexico	19,445	65.5	19,295	65.0
New York	15,253	10.2	12,290	8.2
North Carolina	156,034	54.3	146,112	50.8
North Dakota	60,919	87.6	60,720	87.3
Ohio	38,151	17.3	31,175	14.1
Oklahoma	100,242	60.8	95,790	58.1
Oregon	11,268	17.9	6,525	10.0
Pennsylvania	35,373	20.6	32,061	18.7
Rhode Island	355	9.9	303	8.4
South Carolina	84,518	57.2	79,845	54.0
South Dakota	58,562	85.2	58,605	85.3
Tennessee	151,050	64.4	146,431	62.5
Texas	188,067	48.9	174,577	45.3
Utah	5,560	21.1	5,922	22.5
Vermont	4,633	17.5	2,890	10.9
Virginia	95,265	55.1	88,751	51.3
Washington	7,499	9.4	3,887	4.9
West Virginia	53,463	54.8	49,600	50.8
Wisconsin	39,994	22.5	36,045	20.3
Wyoming	6,793	52.0	6,776	51.8

- (1) REA estimate.
 (2) Percent of all farms in the Nation and in the various States, based on the U. S. 1945 Census of Agriculture.
 (3) From Edison Electric Institute data.